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# **STRATEGY ON LONG TERM SOLUTION OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUE OF THE ALBANIAN WOMEN**

**- CASE STUDY IN THE MUNICIPALITIES  
OF STUDENICHANI AND TEARCE -**



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# STRATEGY

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## I. FOREWORD or... OUR INITIATIVE

### The beginning

In December 2009 The Euro Center Foundation was invited by the Municipality of Studenichani to develop a Strategy for Local Economic Development as well as to provide guidelines and recommendations for local and regional development of this Municipality. In the frames of the activities agreed, series of workshops with the Albanian women were planned, intended to provide them with financial literacy and with capabilities for management of their personal finances. These were very first workshops with the Albanian women that ever took place in this Municipality.

Through the discussions during the workshops with the women it was shown that most of them (at the age 35 to 55 years) have only elementary education and have no previous working experience whatsoever. Some of the young women had (or they are currently completing) elementary or higher education. Especially encouraging was the fact that almost all of them were ready to change their daily routine and they were interested to contribute financially to the family budget.


The constant presence in the Municipality and the continuous contacts with the Albanian women in the Municipality of Studenichani was an incentive as well as initiative to come up with a project that will promote the employment in Albanian women as well as for implementation of a survey that will be used as a basis for drafting of Strategy, together with an analysis, on defining of the opportunities and areas for engagement and involvement of the Albanian women in the economic life of the families and the Municipality.

Following the recommendation by the Mayor of Studenichani Municipality a visit was made to the Municipality of Tearce which is faced with almost identical situation when it comes to the Albanian women: strict traditional behavior in the rural area, conservative attitude, lack of openness towards novelties and changes, low level of education and high unemployment rate.

### Our initiative

When we started with the realization of the project we were not aware of what can we expect: it was quite difficult to invite the women to participate on the workshops – we had several visits to the municipalities but only few of the total women invited actually showed up on the workshops thus making it impossible for the workshops to take place; there was a language barrier – almost 70% of the women did not understand Macedonian language and this was making our job difficult; there was a large mistrust towards us by the participants on the first workshops, many women were not allowed to come and be part of the project, etc.

We had to overcome these obstacles in the following way: we discovered that the women have the greatest trust in the teachers and in the school principals so we sent the workshop invitations through them. This approach was successful and the response rate was 80% of all the women that were invited. We managed to overcome the language barrier through translators as well the initial lack of trust – through communication and common work. As the time was passing by as well as thanks to recommendations by the women that already attended the workshops, more and more Albanian women were showing their interest to be part of this project. So far around 100 women participated on the workshops:



We divided the workshops in two parts:

1. Workshops at which we were gathering information necessary for the Strategy and at which we were acquainting the women with the Project. A volunteer women management team was established on these workshops. These women will be trained to manage and lead the legal entity;
2. Workshops for capacity building of the management team;


### **The intentions of this Strategy**

This Strategy is part of the “Promotion of the Employment and Self-employment among the Albanian women” Project which is financially supported by the USAID MLGA (the Program for Local Economic Development) and co-financed by the Euro Center Foundation and the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce (both partners of the project). Surveys were carried out in these municipalities and these municipalities will be the pilots in which some of the guidelines will be implemented. In both municipalities some of the activities stipulated in this document will be implemented.

In addition to this document, the Project also foresees registration of legal entities – one legal entity in each municipality (the exact legal form will be suggested by this Strategy) as well as implementation of a series of workshops intended for capacity building of the Albanian women. The Euro Center Foundation implemented a series of workshops with some of the interested Albanian women – trainings on project development, financial education and financial management, national funds for support of the rural development, IPA and IPAD – with intention to train these women for management of the future activities of the legal entities. However, analytical ascertainment is that these trainings are far from being sufficient – what is necessary is a series of training modules (as defined in the recommendations of this document) so that the Albanian women can independently and on a long-term engage in the challenge of independent functioning and management of a legal entity.

This Strategy is based on the information and results obtained from the above-mentioned workshops and it has been developed in accordance with the needs of the target group – Albanian women from the rural areas. We deem that this initiative has been undertaken in a right time since the national and the international funds, including the instrument for pre-accession assistance IPA (through its Component IV) are beginning to be intensively financed in the marginalized groups social inclusion sector. We hope that this document will be a serious base and pillar for further actions and activities that will yield long-term and sustainable inclusion of the Albanian women in the economic life of the municipalities.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Mayors and the staff in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce that provided their full support during the process of development of this document. Our appreciation is also extended to the principals and the staff of the elementary schools in both municipalities for their assistance in securing the participation of the Albanian women. We express our humble respect and gratitude too all ladies – Albanian women that participated at the workshops and did the first steps towards something that is usually the most difficult thing to do – change the existing and known situation. Additional gratitude also to the consultants who defined the issues, opportunities and the directions for development included in this document. We express our sincere gratitude to Mrs. Rozalija Karchitska Vasilevska – Team Leader of the Program for Local Economic Development of the USAID MLGA. She identified the need for development of such document and provided the financial support from the USAID – MLGA for its development.



## SUMMARY

This document titled “Strategy for long-term solution to the unemployment problem of the Albanian woman” is based on a case study of Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce. Through detailed sociological and economic analysis of these two rural municipalities this document provides possible directions and specific proposals for economic development of the two municipalities by engaging the Albanian women (on one side) and by overcoming the social suspicion in the rural environment (on the other side). In its content and in the recommendations, this document is applicable to any environment that has the same or similarly defined profile.

The entire process (which included the survey, analysis and the recommendations) was consisted of several intervention steps, as follows:

1. Labor market analysis in the Republic of Macedonia;
2. Analysis of the current economic-social situation by using the statistical data on both municipalities;
3. SWOT analysis of the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce;
4. Social analysis of the marginalized groups in rural areas;
5. Analysis of the opportunities for economic engagement of the Albanian women;
  - SWOT of the target groups of Albanian women living in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce;
  - Comparison analysis of the possible options and alternatives for economic engagement of the Albanian women;
  - Comparison analysis of the form of registration of a legal entity;
6. Dynamic plan for realization of the recommendations deriving from the Strategy;

The Strategy also includes an overview of one part of the national programs for financial support of the rural development and IPARD (included as annexes) as well as overview on the methodologies and techniques for making of handicrafts. There are also photos from the workshops.

The analyses that were carried out through field work and through direct involvement of the target group, combined with the national statistics on both municipalities, yielded the following results:

1. The current employment policies that are realized through the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia are inefficient and do not produce results among this target group – women that belong to minority ethnic groups;
2. It is necessary to promote new and alternative ways of employment or self-employment of the Albanian women;
3. When defining the areas of possible economic engagement of the Albanian women and the form of registration of a legal entity, it is necessary to consider the social and educational living and development conditions of the target group;
4. In accordance with the economic, social and educational opportunities, it is necessary to define active employment measures and measures for economic engagement of the Albanian women;

The Survey has shown the following:

1. The most appropriate area for employment of the Albanian woman is the making of artifacts/ handicrafts that have traditional/ ethnic values;
2. The most appropriate form for registration of a legal entity is the Associations of Citizens (NGO);

The SWOT that was carried out regarding the characteristics of the Albanian women showed that they are a target group with a very low level of education and introvert into the tradition of the rural area, without almost no knowledge about the current market laws (on one side) but also with a high level of readiness and wish for changes (on the other side). After the initial initiative and mentorship over the target group (that will be lasting for given period of time), in order to achieve sustainability of the entire process for long-term resolution of the unemployment problem in Albanian women, it is necessary to pay the greatest attention on the additional education in a form of trainings in order to make some of them capable to fully manage their interests and finances, independent promotion of the ethnic values and tradition as well as establishing the base for social revitalization of the rural environment.

The USAID MLGA project for promotion of employment and self-employment of the Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce<sup>1</sup> also includes a pilot phase in which some of the Strategy recommendations are implemented. The success of the project will be monitored by quantitative and qualitative indicators that are established, as follows:

- 1. The number of legal entities registered;**
- 2. The number of Albanian women that have co-signatory contracts;**
- 3. The total number of women that participated in the trainings;**
- 4. The level of knowledge improved after the delivery of the trainings;**

Eventual potential risks could be the lack of finances, no appropriate distribution for the products, late payments for the products sold. These risks can be resolved with additional activities that would derive from this document (such as the development of Marketing Strategy of Analysis for Identifying Appropriate Market) as well as by applying (with project proposals) to national and international funds and the IPA instrument, Component IV – Measure 1.3. Integration of the unemployed youth, women and the long-term unemployed on the labor market; Measure 3.1. Support to the process of social inclusion of the vulnerable groups of population and of the isolated zones; Measure 3.2. Integration of the ethnic communities – inclusion of women from the ethnic minorities on the labor market by improving their employment potentials.

The complex analyses that were carried out in the “Strategy for long-term solution to the unemployment problem of the Albanian woman” as well as the recommendations and active employment measures that derive from these analyses are the basis for a series of long-term activities for resolving the ad-hoc approach and the passive attitude when it comes to the specific category of unemployed people i.e. women from ethnic minorities, marginalized in the rural areas and setting the basis for their full inclusion in the family and in the society.

We look forward that this Strategy, with a joint commitment by all parties involved, will be materialized for the well-being and social inclusion of the Albanian women and for the benefit of their closer and wider environment.

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<sup>1</sup> This project implemented by the Euro Center Foundation. It is co-financed by the Euro Center Foundation and the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce.

### III. THE METHODOLOGY OF WORK

#### 1. Vertical compliance

The methodology used in the defining of this strategic document is in compliance with the Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environmental protection and Stimulation of the Economic Development (UNCED) which took place in Brazil in 1992. In fact, this strategic document is based on the following principles that originate from the Agenda 21<sup>2</sup>:

1. Sustainability – through which a compliance is ensured between the economic development, environmental protection and the social security in the community;
2. Continuity in the implementation of the programs and development plans;
3. Transparency, synergy and publicity in the operation and work – this is a manner in which the wider public (the community) is informed about the municipal activities with regards to the local economic development which enables involvement of all the stakeholders towards more efficient resolution of their problems;
4. Setting of priorities – setting the priority directions in accordance with the accepted objectives and the real opportunities and capacities;
5. Cost-efficiency and effectiveness – is about rational use of the resources as well as optimal utilization of the developmental advantages.
6. Continuity of the development policy – continuous monitoring of the realization of the objectives set in order to change the development instruments if necessary;
7. Valuation of the natural and cultural-historical heritage – is about the necessary protection of the natural heritage and wealth, including the cultural-historical heritage and their accessibility for all the citizens.

The “Strategy on Long-Term Solution of the Unemployment Issue of the Albanian Women” document is in accordance with the National Employment Strategy 2010 as well as in compliance with the Program for European Integration of the Republic of Macedonia.

#### 2. Horizontal compliance

Considering the above principles, the methodological approach in this strategic document is based on the bottom up approach i.e. so called horizontal compliance thanks to which it was possible to identify the real needs of the final beneficiaries of this document – the Albanian women, in order to establish and develop realistic objectives that will be feasible to be achieved considering the resources available.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Committee, Agenda 21  
[http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res\\_agenda21\\_08.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_08.shtml)

Workshops were carried out during the months of April, May and June 2010 in the premises of the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce as well as in the premises of the elementary schools throughout these municipalities. The following outcomes were defined:

1. Areas in which the interested Albanian women could be engaged;
2. The number of interested Albanian women that could be engaged;
3. The level and degree of awareness about the necessity to function in organized forms;

SWOT analyses for each municipality were defined at the workshops;

The data obtained were analyzed later on and summarized results were obtained – the established components were used to define the recommendations for the further activities.

These workshops reflected the real needs of some of the local economic development stakeholders – the Albanian women so the strategic areas for actions were established accordingly, including the objectives that must be met, the activities i.e. programs that need to be carried out in order to achieve sustainability in the engagement of the Albanian women as economic stakeholders in the municipalities.

The survey/ interview method has been used in the social analysis of the marginalized groups in the rural areas. This method yielded data that was then used for the summarized conclusions.

### **3. The methods of work**

The following methods, tools and techniques were used to develop this document:

1. Case study;
2. Statistical method;
3. Participatory method;
4. Analytic – synthetic method;
  - a. SWOT analysis;
  - b. Comparison analysis;
  - c. Social analysis;
  - d. Surveying/ interview;

The use of this approach in development of the document (which is the strategic base) achieved a comprehensiveness in the resolution of the long-term problem of unemployment among the Albanian women, including not only the economical but also the social and cultural aspect.

## IV. LABOR MARKET OVERVIEW IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

### 1. Gender participation on the labor market

The Republic of Macedonia is facing the challenges of the European Integration and the implementation of the reforms required for meeting the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. The institutional reforms are accompanied by changes and adjustments in the areas such as cross-border cooperation, regional development, human resources, agriculture and rural development.<sup>3</sup>

One of the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia is reduction of the unemployment rate which is currently 34% - a very high level if we consider the percentage of labor active population (63,5%) and the employment rate (41,9%).<sup>4</sup> This situation is additionally burdened by the huge discrepancy in the gender representation and especially important here is the unequal status of the women coming from the minority groups.

According to the recent surveys from 2008, the participation of the women on the labor market is 50,2% which 26,4 percentage points less compared to the percentage of men (76,6%). The participation is especially low among women from ethnic minorities – according to the Census 2002 data<sup>5</sup> it is 10,6% for the Albanian women, 19,2% for the Turks, 29,6% for the Bosnians, 34,7% for the Roma, 36,3% for the Serbs and 41,8% for the Vlachs, compared to the Macedonian women.

The surveys have shown that the low rate of participation of women on the labor market is due to a number of factors:

1. Weak, insufficient and inappropriate transition between “school and work”;
2. Low level of education;
3. Life in rural areas;
4. The traditional role of the woman in the society and in the family, low level of social development and the conservative attitudes (especially among Albanian and Roma women);
5. No match between the system of education and the labor force demand on the labor market;
6. Insufficient absorption power and acceptance of the new labor force on the labor market;

Regarding the level of education, the difference between the participation rates of men and women is decreasing with the increase of the higher education and it is from significantly low level of participation of women with elementary education or less, to very high level of participation of women with higher and university education (population ages 15 years and above): at the level of elementary education or less - 56% men and 24% women, in the secondary education - 77% men and 62% women and greater level of activities of women with higher level of education - 80% men and 82% women.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, there is a big difference in

<sup>3</sup> The reforms are supported by the European Commission through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) which is consisted of five components: Component 1 – Institutional development; Component 2 – Cross-border cooperation; Component 3 – Regional development; Component 4 – Development of human resources and Component 5 – Development of the agriculture and rural development;

<sup>4</sup> According to the labor market survey that was carried out in the Republic of Macedonia in 2008 which included people ages from 15 to 64 years;

<sup>5</sup> Latest official data on the ethnic minorities;

<sup>6</sup> Data from the Labor Force Survey in 2008;

the participation on the labor market of women in the rural areas - 48.3% compared to the urban areas where the participation of the women is up to 66,6%.

## **2. Employment rate**

According to 2008 data, the employment rate among women is 32,9% compared to the men which is 50,7%. This is due to the lower level of activity among women compared to the men. There is very low employment rate among the Albanian (2,9%), Roma (5,5%) and Turkish (5.8%) women.<sup>7</sup>

The employment rate among men and women differs depending on the level of education. There is also a significant difference in the education level between the ethnic groups, especially among the Roma, Albanian and Turkish groups. The participation in the elementary education is proportionate to the ethnic composition of the population but there are important differences when it comes to higher educational levels, especially for the Albanian and Roma students.

Due to the lack of vacancies and surplus of labor force, the women with low level of education are engaging in the information economy. There is a tendency for them to work in sectors that generate low revenues and are physically demanding – unpaid family workers, especially in the agriculture, housewives, care for sick and decrepit persons, etc.

## **3. Unemployment rate**

The National Census 2002 data show that the Roma, Albanians and the Turks are the ethnic groups that suffer the most from unemployment. Their unemployment rate is twice higher compared to the national unemployment rate. The Roma women have the highest unemployment rate (84,1%) followed by the Albanian women (72.9%) and Turkish women (69,7%) The high unemployment rate among the Roma, Albanians and Turks can be attributed to the low educational level as well as to various cultural factors.

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<sup>7</sup> National Census 2002

## V. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF STUDENICHANI AND TEARCE

The current social and economic analysis of the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce includes statistics from the latest official sources which show quantitative data on the presence of the economic activities, employment, education and unemployment rate, respective for each municipality.

This section also includes a SWOT analysis of the overall economic-social situation in the municipalities that are subject of the Study.

### 1. Economic and social characteristics of the Studenichani Municipality

#### Geographic location

The Municipality of Studenichani is located in the South and South-Western part of the Skopje valley. It used to be part of the Municipality of Kisela Voda. The springs of Kadina Reka river are located in this municipality. The area of this municipality is featured with variety relief structure since most of it is mountainous-hilly, located in between the mountains of Goleshnica and Karadzica i.e. it belongs to the Jakupica mountain range. Studenichani Municipality borders with the municipalities of Sopshte, Kisela Voda, Zelenikovo, Chashka, Makedonski Brod and Petrovec.

The territory of Studenichani Municipality is 274 km<sup>2</sup> and is middle size municipality in Macedonia. The average population density is 62 inhabitants per one km<sup>2</sup> which is a relatively good average for a mountainous-hilly municipality.

The Municipality of Studenichani spreads on 276,16 km<sup>2</sup> and, according to the statistics from the latest National Census in 2002 it has a total of 17.271 inhabitants with 19 populated areas, 17 of which are permanently populated, as follows: the central place and the Municipality seat is Studenichani with 4.582 inhabitants; the other populated areas are: Batinci, Drachevica, Dolno Kolichani, Gorno Kolichani, Crvena Voda, Aldinci, Cvetovo, Elovo, Crn Vrv, Markova Sushica, Vrtekica, Malchishte, Umovo, Pagarusha, Osinchani, Ramni Gaber and Morani. The largest one is Batinci with 4.109 inhabitants.

Table 1 – The populated areas and the number of inhabitants in the Municipality of Studenichani

No.	Populated areas	Total inhabitants
1.	Studenichani	5825
2.	Batinci	5375
3.	Morani	1695
4.	Dolno Kolichani	1516
5.	Gorno Kolichani	297
6.	Crvena Voda	51
7.	Kaldirec	
8.	Aldinci	3
9.	Pagarusha	222
10.	Vertekica	112

11.	Ramni Gaber	40
12.	Drachevica	236
13.	Umovo	
14.	Markova Sushica	54
15.	Malchishte	60
16.	Cvetovo	826
17.	Osinchani	1
18.	Elovo	256
19.	Crn Vrv	702
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>17 271</b>

Table 2 – The age structure in the Municipality of Studenichani

Age Structure	Total number
0 – 4	1800
5 – 9	1750
10 – 14	1800
15 – 19	1650
20 – 24	1600
25 – 29	1650
30 – 34	1550
35 – 39	1150
40 – 44	950
45 – 49	700
50 – 54	580
55 – 59	580
60 – 64	500
65 – 69	420
70 – 74	220
75 – 79	180
80 – 84	40
85 +	20

Source: National Census of the population, households and apartments in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002 (Volume XIII), State Statistical office.

By analyzing the data from the Census in 2002 we can notice that in the Municipality of Studenichani there is mainly young population which is one of the comparison advantages for development if we consider the fact that most of the rural municipalities in Macedonia have population at 45 years of age and older.

Table 3 – The trend of population increase in the Municipality of Studenichani

The trend of population increase 2002 - 2008	Total number
2002	17246
2007	18506
2008	18816

Source: Population estimates as of 30.06.2008 and 31.12.2008 according to their gender, July 2009 (HTEC 3- 2007), State Statistical Office.

If we add to the data from 2002 the statistic from 2007 and 2008 we can see that not only the Municipality of Studenichani has young population but there is a continuous increase of the population in this municipality which is an indicator of a growing human potential in the municipality.

Table 4 – Total population, households and apartments in the Municipality of Studenichani

Total population	Households	Apartments (including all types of dwelling units)
17246	3570	4349

Source: National Census of the population, households and apartments in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002 Volume XIII), State Statistical Office.

Table 5 – Gender structure in the Municipality of Studenichani

Gender structure	Total
Men	8910
Women	8336
<b>Total</b>	<b>17246</b>

Table 6 – Population in the Municipality of Studenichani age 10 and more, per gender and literacy level

Total		Men		Women	
Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate
12711	938	6813	237	5898	701

Table 7 – Sectors of economic activities

Sectors of activities (status)	Business entities 31.12.2005	Business entities 31.12.2004	Business entities 31.12.2003
<b>Agriculture, hunt and forestry</b>	12	12	11
<b>Fishing</b>	-	-	-
<b>Extraction of ore and stone</b>	1	-	-
<b>Processing industry</b>	27	25	23
<b>Supply with electricity, gas and water</b>	-	-	-
<b>Construction</b>	47	36	31
<b>Retail and wholesale trade, fixing of motor vehicles, motorbikes, home appliances and items for personal use</b>	309	299	282
<b>Hotels and restaurants</b>	9	8	6
<b>Transportation, storage and communications</b>	146	121	111
<b>Financial mediation</b>	-	-	-
<b>Activities regarding real estate, renting and business activities</b>	7	6	6
<b>Public administration and defense, compulsory social protection</b>	8	9	9
<b>Education</b>	3	3	3
<b>Health and social work</b>	2	2	2
<b>Other communal, cultural, general and personal service activities</b>	15	14	13
<b>Exterritorial organizations and bodies</b>	-	-	-

If we consider the data regarding business entities we will notice that the number of business entities is increasing year by year. However, if we take a look at the structure of the business entities we will see that most of them are in the trade sector (around 300) while the production and construction sectors are very little present (around 25 processing and 45 construction entities).

Due to the rural character of the municipality, most of people are engaged in the agriculture as employees in the household's i.e. individual farming. So if we compare the population (by considering that the labor active population is at the age from 20 to 65 years than over 60% of the total labor capable population is employed in the individual farms.

Table 7 – Households members in the Municipality of Studenichani that work on the individual farms, according to age and gender.

Total	Up to 25 years age		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65 years and more	
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
5790	1384	632	1220	548	1165	561	907	435	628	284	486	178

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, Agricultural Census 2007.

### Employment

Table 8 – Population structure older than 15 years of age, according to the economic activity

<b>Economically active</b>	Employed	1.179	9,98%
	Unemployed	2.321	19,64%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>3.500</b>	<b>29,62%</b>
<b>Economically inactive</b>		8.319	70,38%

Table 9 - Population structure older than 15 years of age, according to the economic activity - men

<b>Economically active</b>	Employed	1.113	18,26%
	Unemployed	1.992	32,69%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>3.705</b>	<b>50,59%</b>
<b>Economically inactive</b>		2.989	70,05%

Table 10 - Population structure older than 15 years of age, according to the economic activity – women

<b>Economically active</b>	Employed	66	1,15%
	Unemployed	329	5,75%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>6,90%</b>
<b>Economically inactive</b>		5.330	93,10%

## 2. Economic and social characteristics of the Municipality of Tearce

### Administrative and territorial organization

The Municipality of Tearce is located in the North-West of the Republic of Macedonia and spreads on 138,12 km<sup>2</sup>. It is one of the smaller municipalities in Macedonia. To the North-West the municipality borders Kosovo, to the South-West it borders the Municipality of Tetovo and on the East it borders the Municipality of Jegunovce. The Tearce Municipality includes the following thirteen populated areas: Neproshteno, Leshok, Slatino, Tearce, Prshovce, Glogji, Dobroshte, Nerashte, odri, Varvara, Brezno, Jeloshnik and Prvce. The latter four are mountainous-hilly villages and the rest are located in the valley of the municipality.

The Municipality seat is in the village of Tearce which is the administrative, cultural and economic center in this part of the Dolni Polog region. It is located 11 kilometers North of Tetovo, some fifty kilometers West of Skopje and 80 kilometers from the "Alexander the Great" airport in Skopje.

### The population

According to the latest Census of the population and households in 2002, the Municipality of Tearce has a total of 22.454 inhabitant, as follows:

- Albanians 18.950 (84, 39 %);
- Macedonians 2.739 (12, 20 %);
- Turks 515 (2, 29%);
- Roma 54 (0, 24%);
- Serbs 7 (0, 03%) and
- Other 167 (0, 74%).

Table 11 - The populated areas and the number of inhabitants in the Municipality of Tearce

No.	Populated areas	Total inhabitants
1.	Neproshteno	1.309
2.	Leshok	440
3.	Varvara	0
4.	Slatino	4.112
5.	Brezno	8
6.	Tearce	3.974
7.	Prshovce	2.516
8.	Glogji	1.295
9.	Jeloshnik	0
10.	Dobroshte	3.549
11.	Nerashte	3.485
12.	Odri	1.739
13.	Prvce	27
<b>Total:</b>		<b>22.454</b>

According to the age structure of the population, the Tearce Municipality is among younger municipalities:

- Ages 0 - 14 years 5.453 inhabitants (24,28%) ;
- Ages 15 - 64 years 15.005 inhabitants (66,83%) ;
- Over 65 years 1.959 inhabitants (8,72 %) ;
- Unknown age 37 inhabitants (0,16 %) .

According to the same Census, the municipality has 5.095 households i.e. 5.480 dwelling units. The average household is consisted of 4,41 people. In percentages it looks like this:

- Households with 1 member 4,16 %
- Households with 2 members 11,97 %
- Households with 3 members 13,88 %
- Households with 4 members 25,57 %
- Households with 5 members 20,65 %
- Households with 6 members 13,01 %
- Households with 7 members 5,57 %
- Households with 8 members 1,43 %
- Households with over 10 members 1,61 %

Since the Municipality of Tearce is home for 22.454 inhabitants on a total area of 138,12 km, it is a densely populated municipality. The average per 1 km is 163 inhabitants.

From a total of 22.454 inhabitants, 4.900 are laborly capable in this municipality. From this number only 1.825 are employed (37%). The remaining 3.075 unemployed people are faced with daily existential problems. The unemployment rate among the young people, according to the Census in 2002 (ages 15-24) is 84,2. The total unemployment is at the very high rate of 87,5%. The annual public costs for education are 2.519 denars per capita.

Table 12 – Employment in the economic sectors

Employed	% of the labor force	Total labor force
Agriculture	5,1	93
Industry	39,9	728
Service	46,6	850
Unknown	8,4	153

Table 13 – Unemployment among the young people (as a percentage of the labor force ages 15 to 24 years)

Labor force ages 15 to 25 years	882
Unemployed ages 15 to 25 years	743
Unemployment rate among the youth	842

Table 14 – Labor force - women

<b>Labor force – women</b>				
Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployed rate %	Activity rate %
1.303	416	887	68,1	18,5

Table 15 – Participation of both men and women in the economically active population

Labor force	Men	Women	Men %	Women %
4.840	3.537	1.303	73,1	26,9

Table 16 – Labor force and the rate of unemployment

Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate %	Employment rate %
4.840	1.825	3.015	62,3	37,7

Table 17 – Level of education

Total population 10 +	Literacy rate %	Illiteracy rate %
Men	9.825	97,9
Women	9.470	92,2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>19.295</b>	<b>95,1</b>

The unemployment rate in both municipalities is up to 70% while the unemployment among women is up to 80%. Most of the people in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce is engaged in trade, industry and agriculture. The agriculture as an economic sector officially exists in the Republic of Macedonia since 3 years ago. Most of the farmers in the Republic of Macedonia are still working illegally i.e. their agricultural businesses are not registered. This situation is very much present in the rural areas where there are very obvious ownership and title inconsistencies which prevent the appropriate legalization of the agricultural activities. If she is engaged in the agriculture as a family activity, the Albanian woman is not paid for that and she is not employed because, according to the tradition, even if there is a legal form for doing business such company will be registered in the name of the male family members.

The situation is very similar in the trade and industry sectors: illegal businesses and shadow economy where the involvement of the women is minimal, not properly paid and the Albanian woman is not employed.

The common employment methods do not treat the Albanian women from these two municipalities which can be seen in the high unemployment rate, especially among those with low level of education and training.

On the other side, the alternative economic activities – such as activities for promotion of the rural tourism, making of artifacts, the catering through the authentic ambience and local cuisine with ethnic features – are not at all present as official and legal economic activities.

### 3. SWOT analysis of the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce

The statistical data provided us with insight into the quantitative situation in both municipalities with regards to the areas that are relevant to this document – population, age structure, economic activities, education and employment.

We carried out the SWOT analysis with the involvement of all the stakeholders – Albanian women, farmers, the business sector, employees in the municipal administration – the analysis provides a comprehensive picture about the current, qualitative situation in both municipalities and it shows the general picture about the opportunities for prosperity, the weaknesses where interventions are necessary in order to create full prerequisites for sustainable economic development, the limitations that exist due to objective factors (on national and international level) as well as the achievements so far by the municipalities.

The SWOT analyses for both municipalities include geographic and demographic characteristic and data on many strategic areas: urbanism and infrastructure (transportation, energy and communal), economy and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), agriculture and rural development, education, tourism and environment.

The strategic area on development of the human capital and labor market are elaborate in more details in this document in the section dedicated to the Labor Market. The social inclusion of the marginalized groups and the gender equality will be analyzed in the section dedicated to the opportunities for economic engagement of the Albanian women with a separate SWOT analysis.

#### 3.1. SWOT analysis of the Municipality of Studenichani

Table 18 - SWOT analysis of the municipality of Studenichani

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b>Geographic and demographic characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The municipality has a wealth of natural resources;</li> <li>The population is mainly young – total demographic revitalization;</li> <li>The municipality is on the first place when it comes to birth rates in Macedonia (18 promiles in 2008);</li> </ul> <p><b>Urbanism and infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently in implementation is a pilot project for registration of the municipal property (preparation and prerequisite for management with the construction land by the municipality);</li> <li>The urban for the industrial zone has been developed;</li> <li>Funds are secured for fixing and upgrade of some of the transportation infrastructure in the municipality;</li> <li>All 17 villages in the municipality have electrical installations;</li> </ul> <p><b>Economy and small and medium sized enterprises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private sector has good cooperation with the municipality;</li> <li>Smooth distribution of the products to local and international markets;</li> </ul> <p><b>Agriculture and rural development</b></p>	<p><b>Geographic and demographic characteristics</b></p> <p>Insufficiently utilized natural resources (especially along the rivers that flow through the municipality);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inappropriate river beds – the water overflows and causes floods;</li> <li>Large unemployment rate – 70%;</li> </ul> <p><b>Urbanism and infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no detailed urban plan for the greater part of the municipality (80%);</li> <li>The road infrastructure is in a very bad shape – it is a deterrent for the potential investors;</li> <li>Obsolete electrical installations and power lines, lack of continuous electricity supply that disrupts the operation of the production and processing facilities and causes losses for the private sector;</li> <li>The electrical power transmission lines are at a very low height (accidents happen often);</li> <li>90% of the municipal territory does not have faecal drainage system;</li> <li>Only three villages in the municipality have water supply network;</li> <li>Most of the water supply network is made of asbestos pipes;</li> </ul> <p><b>Economy and small and medium sized enterprises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no regional cooperation between the small and medium sized companies;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the agricultural land is first and second class (the most fertile) and it is appropriate for early vegetables and fruit growing;</li> <li>• There is water under the entire municipality (irrigation with wells);</li> </ul> <p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly motivated staff in the schools;</li> <li>• Intensive implementation of free activities aimed to motivate the children;</li> </ul> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restart of the public communal enterprise for collection of waste;</li> </ul> <p><b>Local self-government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The municipality has entered the second phase of decentralization since April 2010;</li> <li>• The municipality started to tax the property in the municipality;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of shadow economy (large number of unregistered business and the companies do not issue invoices);</li> <li>• There is no Council of Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• There is no software for registration and tracking of the small and medium sized companies;</li> <li>• Lack of information about the availability of current funds for support of the small and medium sized companies;</li> </ul> <p><b>Agriculture and rural development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 % of the agricultural activities are illegal (no registered farming business and the title/ property deed issues are not resolved);</li> <li>• Bad access roads to the farming plots (it is creating problems with the distribution and transportation of the agricultural products);</li> <li>• There is no electricity at the farming plots (which is causing problems with regards to irrigation – the irrigation with oil pumps is very expensive);</li> </ul> <p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old school buildings (that have asbestos roofs, obsolete electrical, water and communal installations, lack of continuous heating);</li> <li>• The number of pupils is greater than the capacity of the schools;</li> </ul> <p><b>Tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So far there are no activities for tourism development (rural or alternative tourism);</li> </ul> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Drisla landfill is located on the territory of this municipality;</li> <li>• Large faecal pollution due to the lack of faecal drainage system in the municipality;</li> <li>• Illegal connections of faecal drainages into the drainage water channels;</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of associations and business communities;</li> <li>• Opportunities to use the EU funds that have become available (FP 7, CIP);</li> <li>• Opportunities for investments by the immigrants from these municipalities abroad;</li> <li>• Utilization of the IPARD and IPA – the EU pre-accession funds;</li> <li>• Promotion of cooperation relationships with the processing sector and with the primary farmers/ producers;</li> <li>• Promotion of the production for a known buyer;</li> <li>• Public awareness raising on the need for registration of the agricultural activities;</li> <li>• Opportunities to use the financial support in the agricultural and rural development;</li> <li>• Opportunities for development of rural tourism;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No banks on the territory of the municipality;</li> <li>• The credit lines available are not favorable;</li> <li>• VAT tax on the raw materials – complicated and unnecessary procedure for the VAT refund;</li> <li>• Complex procedure for obtaining documentation for doing business;</li> <li>• Complex procedure to obtain construction permits;</li> <li>• There is no cooperation with the central Government;</li> <li>• Inappropriate legislation in the private sector concerning the purchase of seed materials – there is no control over the agricultural pharmacies on what material they sell;</li> <li>• There are no appropriate inspectorates on the types and qualities of the seed materials;</li> <li>• There is no law for indemnification of the farmers that have suffered damages from the low-quality seed materials;</li> <li>• Inappropriate custom regulations for import and export of products and raw materials;</li> <li>• Uncontrolled import of cheap goods (from China);</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Main conclusions from the SWOT analysis of the Studenichani Municipality

On the basis of all data and opinions summarized and presented in the SWOT analysis of the economic and competitive situations in the municipality, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The Studenichani Municipality is a municipality with relatively young population which is one of the comparative advantages for development if we take into account the fact that most of the rural municipalities in Macedonia mainly have population ages 45 years and above;
2. In order to be able to talk about creating a climate for development of the municipality and improvement of the economy it is necessary to provide the main prerequisites – transportation, communal and energy infrastructure – which is the main condition for investments by local or international capital;
3. The educational infrastructure in the Municipality of Studenichani is quite unfavorable and additional efforts must be made towards improvement of the educational structure in the municipality;
4. From economical aspect, the Municipality of Studenichani is not developed although the number of business entities is on increase. However, this municipality belongs to the category of rural municipalities so most of the revenues that the people generate comes from agriculture. Other important industry sectors are the trade/ commerce and construction;
5. Due to the rural character of this municipality is very common that majority of the people are working in the agricultural sectors as employees i.e. individual farming economics. So if we compare the population – if we take that the working population is in the age group of 20 to 65 years – it would mean that over 60% of the total laborly capable population is employed in the individual farming economies;
6. Although the municipality has a rural character it has done nothing so far towards promotion of the rural tourism by emphasizing the ethnic and traditional values through artifact making and artisan skills, including the catering in authentic environment and national local cuisine as well as promotion of the cultural heritage. And this is exactly the area which has the greatest development potential giving the current circumstances, on one side, and engaging i.e. employment of most of the unemployed population – Albanian women, on the other side. Furthermore, this is an area in which the Albanian women can be engaged and be economically active by complying to the tradition and ethnic customs;
7. One of the strengths stipulated in the SWOT analysis is the solid cooperation between the business sector and the local self-government. The staff in the local self-government should be encouraged to continuously improve the level of quality of the services they provide to the people. The local self-government should assist in the

implementation of active employment measures, especially among the marginalized groups. Furthermore, the local self-government should adopt a detailed urban plan. By doing so it will facilitate the development of the business and will enable access to the credit lines for the business sector, including promotion of the public private partnership;

8. Most of the current businesses are illegal which prevents them to use the opportunities provided by the investors. On the other hand it is necessary to work towards awareness raising among the local population about their legal obligation to contribute to the economy and comply to the laws (payment of taxes, contributions, other company fees, property taxes, etc.);
9. Weakness is also the lack of information among the people about the opportunities provided by the banks in a form of credits. It is necessary that the banking sector implements proactive measures in order to raise interest among these people. In addition, the local self-government should aim towards utilization of the opportunities provided by the donors. By doing so it will contribute towards re-gaining of trust in the donors by the local population thus enabling benefits on the level of the entire municipality;

### 3.3. SWOT analysis of the Tearce Municipality

Table 19 - SWOT analysis of the Tearce Municipality

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b>Geographic and demographic characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources (forests, pastures, arable land, mountains, rivers);</li> <li>• Favorable geographic location of the municipality and good geo-traffic connectivity (regional road R-405);</li> <li>• Tearce Municipality has young laborly capable population that is keen to work (84,2%);</li> <li>• Qualified labor force and university educated people (389 with university background, 10 MAs and 2 PHDs) which is above the national average;</li> </ul> <p><b>Agriculture and rural development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common and recognizable cattle breeding brands (the lamb from Shara mountain and hard cheese);</li> <li>• Cattle breeding development in the mountain ranges of the municipality, featured with rich numbers of cattle – sheep, pigs, cattle, etc.</li> <li>• Production of famous agricultural products “Tetovo beans” and “Tetovo apple”;</li> <li>• Large number of honey producers;</li> </ul> <p><b>Local self-government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly equipped and organized local administration;</li> <li>• Quality services in the area of urbanism – fast issuing of construction permits;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographic and demographic characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High unemployment rate (62,3%)</li> <li>• 84.2% unemployed young people ages 15 to 24;</li> </ul> <p><b>Urbanism and infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficiently developed infrastructure in the municipality (old local road infrastructure, lack of faecal and atmospheric waters drainage systems, old water supply network);</li> </ul> <p><b>Sources of financing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no branch offices of banks and saving houses in the municipality,</li> <li>• Presence of local and international foundations and financial institutions;</li> <li>• Lack of interest by the investors (mainly economic immigrants from this municipality);</li> <li>• No local or international foreign direct investors;</li> </ul> <p><b>Economy and small and medium sized enterprises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No associations of businesses;</li> <li>• Lack of clusters;</li> <li>• Unregistered companies;</li> <li>• The companies do not issue invoices;</li> <li>• No premises for processing of the primary agricultural products;</li> </ul>

<b>NGO sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiethnic municipality, NGOs and civil associations, ready to cooperate with municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia and in the region;</li> </ul>	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening of branch offices of banks, saving houses and funds;</li> <li>Utilization of foreign investments;</li> <li>EU pre-accession and available funds;</li> <li>Funds of our immigrants abroad and other funds;</li> <li>Establishment of associations of businesses;</li> <li>Center for information and support to businesses;</li> <li>Branding of products;</li> <li>Establishment of municipal credit funds for development of the private sector;</li> <li>More effective and efficient local self-government for utilization of the budget for economic development purposes;</li> <li>Partnerships between the private and the public sector;</li> <li>Greater utilization of the natural resources (water potential, mineral water springs in the municipality);</li> <li>Tourism development;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delayed accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union and inability to utilize the EU structural funds;</li> <li>Concessions awarded by the state institutions to external concessionaires – awarding of concessions to cattle breeders from other municipalities;</li> <li>Lack of harmonization between the local and the national strategy for economic development;</li> <li>Bad credit policy;</li> <li>Unfavorable bank conditions (collaterals and high interest rates);</li> <li>Deferring of the potential investors due to the overly complex and long term procedure of the process;</li> <li>Unfair competition;</li> <li>Illegal import of goods;</li> <li>Illegal businesses and shadow economy;</li> </ul>

### 3.4. Main conclusions from the SWOT analysis of the Tearce Municipality

On the basis of all data and opinions summarized and presented in the SWOT analysis of the economic and competitive situations in the municipality, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The competitive geographic location of the Tearce municipality provides important advantages and in the same time provides opportunities for economic development. The Corridor 8 is very close to the municipality. The regional road R-405 to Kosovo also runs through the municipality. Large percentage of the municipal territory is in the Shar Mountain which provides great potential for development of the mountain tourism. Very famous in Macedonia (and not quite known internationally) are the Shara Mountain lamb, the yellow cheese from Shara Mountain and the hard cheese;
2. Traditionally, the Municipality of Tearce is farming municipality where the farmers and the cattle breeds are not united, they have insufficient knowledge about new standards and technologies; have insufficiently developed agricultural production and distribution of their products;
3. On a long term, the municipality will not be able to develop successfully without attracting foreign and local direct investments. The Tearce Municipality should especially focus towards attracting investments from the many immigrants from this municipality living abroad;

4. As a small municipality, Tearce has the opportunity in a short period to establish efficient and effective local government that will be solely providing environment for success of the businesses and reduction of the unemployment;
5. One of the threats that emerged from the SWOT analysis is the lack of harmonization between the local and national strategy for economic development. First, it is necessary to make that harmonization and secondly, the municipality should implement a series of activities that will yield improvement of the services for its people. The municipality should provide incentives for development of the local business thus strengthening the economy. The concessions that are now being awarded to other municipalities are not focused on the Municipality of Tearce. It is necessary to achieve efficient and effective local self-government that will be a true service to the businesses by implementing programs that will cut the time needed for issuing of permits, introduction of one-stop shop system, training and further equipping of the local government;
6. It is necessary to establish competitive investment conditions by providing incentive fiscal measures to the entrepreneurs and businesses. This is a direct local fiscal measure for stimulation of the entrepreneurship and increase of new direct investments, including stimulation to the employment. There will be a development of a program on specific tax exemptions with regards to the local budget for businesses with quality development which will open opportunities for new direct employments;
7. Same as in the Municipality of Studenichani, the tourism in Tearce Municipality is not developed at all. This especially goes to the rural tourism that will enable employment of the Albanian women and will in the same time ensure the preservation of the ethnic and traditional values;

## **VI. ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN RURAL AREAS**

### **1. Marginalized groups in rural areas**

The rural areas are featured with certain characteristics in related to the educational structure of the population, traditional values, distance from the urban areas and weak flow of information and goods.

The access to the groups that live in the rural areas is very important for the purpose of socialization and achievement of the cultural development level. Since it is common for the rural communities to associate to marginalization of the social benefits and minimization of the urban values, serious approach to this issue is required because the consequences can be long-term and irreversible during longer period of time, which leaves trace on the common human being, its family as well as on the dynamics and quality of the everyday life and the usual working obligations.

### **2. Educational structure of the population**

The educational structure of the population is one of the most important factors in the behavior of the individuals living in the marginalized groups in the rural communities. In these areas the educational level is mainly low or secondary but there are exceptional examples when some individuals will complete higher education. However, the point remains that very small percentage of those completing university education return to their rural community (around 2%). These are usually people that have family business or are involved in some working tasks in the municipality. This lack of return to the rural community is usually caused by their inability to find their place in the urban rather than by the wish to return and perspective future in the rural area. More specifically, they are very little tied by the traditional values, family relations and the natural environment which is mostly due to the reduced opportunities for development and the ambitions that are alive due to the modern way of life.

Much larger is the number of individuals that have graduated secondary education in the local school while much smaller is the number of those that have graduated secondary school in some urban area – this is mainly due to the financial capacity of their parents as well as due to the perception that maybe such will result in better and more quality education, with positive social effects on the individuals' development. Commonly (with some exceptions) if the individual enrolls in some other secondary school in some urban environment, his/ her chances of resuming the education onto university are more than 90%. This usually assumes good financial situation but also a wish for progress and greater ambitions of the individual.

The family tradition of reduced education also influences the parents' decision not to encourage their children for further education. The common thinking in such areas is how to achieve some social family reconciliation with the resources managed by the wider family i.e. if they deal with farming it should be within the foreseen minimum; if they do production of traditional products it should be mainly for the local market without even thinking to use some modern tools for promotion and sales of the traditional artifacts. It is important to mention that, in the recent years, this situation is changing and there is progress towards more modern ways of promotion. However, this is still insignificant and minimal.

Experiences from other countries such as Ireland and Turkey point out to the need to initially bring closer the educational processes to the rural environments so that it is possible later to respond to the increased demand and to the results from the promotional measures. In the 1980s these two countries used to be one of the most undeveloped in Europe. The experiences now confirm that Ireland is one of the most developed countries in the European Union and that Turkey is slowly growing into a regional power on two continents and three civilizations.

This example unambiguously points out that it is justified to promote this measure in the rural areas and provide socialization of the local population.

### **3. Traditional values**

The cherishing of traditional values is typical for the rural environments, especially in those that are more distant from the urban areas.

Survey was carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians).

**The respondents were asked the following 5 questions:**

1. Would you make wedding in accordance with the traditional or modern customs?
2. Would you deviate from the tradition if it is contrary to your personal wishes and beliefs?
3. Is tradition closely related to the religious beliefs?
4. Would you immigrate from your place of birth because of the rural character of that environment?
5. Traditional or modern values?

According to the results from this survey<sup>8</sup> we can make an overall conclusion that the tradition is slowly (but steady) losing its place in front of the modern challenges. This goes even for the rural areas about which there is a general notion that they deal pretty hard with the traditional dogmas. The wish for modernization in these environments is much greater than it can be seen in the everyday life. The need for modernization of the environment with modern content is evident since the rural character is deterrent for the young people to continue living in the rural area (although it is their place of birth) which is an indicator for even greater severity of the problem. The survey also showed the clear wish to separate the tradition from personal beliefs and wishes, especially in generational sense as well getting rid of the traditional dogmas. When it comes to religion it remained that it is an issue of personal conviction and it is not quite strictly related to the tradition, which is quite close to the European attitudes.

### **4. Estrangement and alienation of the environment**

The estrangement and alienation of the environment is very subjective factor thus it is difficult to detect. Its origins come from the closed attitudes of the family, gender discrimination which is very common in the rural areas, the age hierarchy in the family, the cases of incest which are almost never reported and are difficult to prove, family-inherited diseases which are usually

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<sup>8</sup> Table summary of the questions and answers (per age) are provided in Annex 2 of this document.

hidden from the rest, the mental illnesses which are seen as a shame for the family thus such are never reported and this prevents the appropriate treatment of these diseases.

In the rural areas the gender discrimination is quite present. It is manifested in the segmentation of the family obligations into male (work in the fields, hard physical work, construction works, etc.) and female (care for the children, care for the family by cooking, washing, etc.). However, more and more we have cases where the women are involved in the agricultural activities of the family without being specially paid for that. Another usual thing is that the female family members have not finished even elementary education and they also do other difficult physical works. The male family members more often finalize their elementary and secondary education (sometimes even university education) but this is usually just one person from the whole family (rarely two and more persons). Because of this, the insecurity among the people is increased (especially among the female population), inability to open up specific perspectives in the society, regardless of the fact that it is a rural area, this increasing the estrangement and the reduced socialization.

The interest for socialization and friendship is reduced and the percentage of tacit friendship (so called shadow socialization) is on increase, which is a very interesting phenomenon. This means that there is a need among the female population to get together away from the eyes of the public i.e. congregate in a specific time of the day at specific places where they will not be seen and in times of the day when they are certain that the male family members do their job outside of the family house. In these occasions (which usually last up to one hour) they will have a cigarette, drink tea and even drink some alcohol. This is practiced in almost every opportunity they have and the male family members almost never find out about this.

As a result of alienation there are arranged marriages which are usually agreed among the most senior family members, without approval by the parties that are directly involved (the bride and the groom). This results in greater introversion, reduced communication and reduced socialization both among the male and female family members. These things often end up with family misunderstandings but not with termination of such marriage exactly because of the supposed shame from the community and execration they would be subject to if such termination/ divorce happens.

The cases of certain diseases in the family, regardless of whether we are talking about inherited or acquired diseases is in 90% of the cases accompanied with hiding of the real reason because of the shame from the community.

The mental diseases are often subject to ridiculing and sometimes there are even avoidances to marry members of that family due to the fear and lack of information about such condition which, after all, is not so horrible and it can be eventually changed.

The diseases are usually kept hidden from the community and this is reducing the opportunity for appropriate treatment, timely reaction and explanation that such situation can be changed and it is possible to entirely heal that person. In this regard it is important to mention that the rural environment as such is rarely serviced by some institution that would be available to these people on daily basis for eventual advice, opinion or consultation. This would contribute towards reduction of the closeness of the family circle and provide opportunities to talk openly about the health problems, both in the family and in the environment.

The most common way of social life and fun in the rural areas are the meetings in the local restaurants and tavernas. These are good sign of socialization but in the same time quite

limited way of congregation and hanging out, without real cultural character, with a tendency to become a vice. This manner of socialization is typical for the male population.

## **5. Remoteness from the urban areas**

The remoteness from the urban communities most definitely has a large effect on the socialization of the population. This effect is noticeable in the time period of advent of the modern trends in all fields of life, reduced possibility for social gathering and congregation because the attractive content and locations are far away, the physical distance which yields problems regarding transportation, the additional travel time and the reduced opportunities for mobility at time of day and night.

It is known that most of the cultural events take place in the urban areas, mainly due to the commercial nature of these events and due to the larger frequency of people, which provides opportunities for better promotion. Furthermore, most of the entertaining events are also taking place in the urban areas. This situation results in reduction of the possibilities for these events to reach the marginalized groups in the rural areas and the increase of the needs for cultural events in the smaller and undeveloped areas.

The physical distances are additionally complicating the problem. This requires more finances for travel to the urban areas and additional time to be spent. These factors are very difficult for the people from the rural areas so often they are unable to afford to be present on the cultural and entertaining events – this goes even for those people that can afford coming. Put simply – the distance per se is the deterring factor for the wish to travel longer to reach the place. Commonly, the remote areas are difficult to access with vehicles, the roads are old and ruined or do not exist at all; or they are very narrow and dangerous for traffic. In the Republic of Macedonia the problem with access to the rural areas with car is very real, especially in the areas that are towards the mountains. In some periods of the year, especially in winter (November – March) often is the case when the mountain villages are cut-off from the rest of the country, with very difficult access (or no access at all) to them. Sometimes the situation is so bad that even the ambulance vehicle access is not possible.

As a result of the bad infrastructure very often the public transport is not at the appropriate level – for example, there are no sufficient buses during the day or there is no public transport at all during evening or night hours. In the most rural areas there is only one public transport in the day which commutes to the urban areas. However, there are rural areas in which there is no public transport at all so the people have to walk for several kilometers to reach the closest public transport.

Due to these factors, the remoteness of the rural areas is maybe the main reason for the reduced socialization of the marginalized groups. For the needs of this analysis a survey has been carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians):

- 1. Would you go to cinema more often if you were to have appropriate public transport?**

2. **How satisfied you are from the public transport that commutes to and from your place of residence?**
3. **Are financial costs for transport problem for you to go out for friendship and gatherings?**
4. **Would you immigrate from your place of birth because of lack of cultural and entertaining activities?**
5. **How many times in one month do you commute to an urban area?**

The general conclusion from the survey is that the younger generations have a real need for more active gatherings and friendship events, if there are opportunities for that. Another conclusion is that they would never reject a presence to a cultural-entertaining event if such is taking place close to their place of living and if the distance and the manner of transport are not big problem.<sup>9</sup>

## **6. Weak flow and dissemination of information**

This factor is very interesting for observation because some tendencies have changed in just a couple of years which is mainly due to the globalization and the perspectives it brings.

**“Fifteen years ago we had to stay at home and wait for a phone call from a friend as an initiation for gatherings. Now, we have no need to wait at home“.**

The technological progress, globalization of the communications, social internet portals, reduced communication costs, reduced distances between the nations and religions, gender equality, human rights – are some of the reasons that have their inevitable effect on the increased flow of information goods thanks to which the real physical distances are diminishing and the real and virtual communication between the people is on increase.

The great technical and technological development, reduction of the communication costs, reduction of the prices of the personal and mobile computers and the better access to communications inevitably results in easier access to information. Due to such changes in the last fifteen years this factor becomes more and more insignificant and marginal.

For the needs of this document a survey has been carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians). All the respondents answered the following five questions.

1. **Do you use mobile phone?**
2. **Do you know what kind of information you can get from the Internet?**
3. **Do you use social networks on the Internet?**
4. **Do you know what is “Internet search engine”?**
5. **Do you buy through the Internet?**

The survey showed that the situation regarding these virtual developments has been significantly improved. In this aspect, the rural areas in the Republic of Macedonia are not deviating much from the global tendencies for penetration of the IT society in the homes and increased communication frequency.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Table summary of the questions and answers (per age) are provided in Annex 2 of this document.

<sup>10</sup> Table summary of the questions and answers (per age) are provided in Annex 2 of this document.

## VII. ANALYSIS OF THE ALTERNATIVES FOR ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT OF THE ALBANIAN WOMEN

The Strategy on long-term solution of the unemployment issue of the Albanian women is based on case study in two rural municipalities – Studenichani and Tearce. The data used in analysis of the opportunities for economic engagement of the Albanian women were obtained at the workshops that took place in both municipalities with participation of over 100 Albanian women from 10 populated areas. The information that we received from both municipalities are identical so this section of the document applies to both of them.

When defining the analysis we took into account the real needs of the Albanian women in both municipalities, their capabilities and opportunities for economic engagement in the family and in the municipality as well as compliance to the values related to the tradition and their ethnic background.

The analysis of the alternatives for economic engagement of the Albanian women includes the following:

1. SWOT analysis of the characteristics of the Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce;
2. Alternatives for employment/ self-employment of the Albanian women and their comparison analysis;
3. Comparative analysis of the forms of registration;
4. Dynamic plan of activities for realization of the analysis recommendations;

### 1. SWOT analysis of the characteristics of the Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce

Table 20 - SWOT analysis of the characteristics of the Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready for change;</li> <li>• They accept new things;</li> <li>• Great readiness for new knowledge;</li> <li>• The women from all ages know how to make artifacts with traditional (ethnic) values – knitting, needle work, sewing (weaving is not included) and to cook traditional food;</li> <li>• They are ready to adapt their artifacts to the market needs;</li> <li>• More and more young women graduate from secondary and higher education;</li> <li>• All women have stocks of artifacts (which can be used as turnover capital, without direct financial investments at the start-up);</li> <li>• Some of the mature women are ready to share their knowledge with the younger;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High unemployment rate among Albanian women (up to 80%);</li> <li>• Low level of education and training;</li> <li>• Some of the Albanian women are forced to wear traditional clothes;</li> <li>• Some women are getting married because it is the choice of their family;</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge about the business and market environment;</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge about the market laws of offer and demand;</li> <li>• Total lack of knowledge about the legal forms for functioning of an activity (registration of a company or association);</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge about the legal provisions required for legal functioning of a company (cash register, invoices);</li> <li>• Lack of trust towards financial institutions (especially regarding the use of credits as a start-up capital for opening of new business);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of capital that will be the investment for establishment of a company;</li> <li>• Lack of trust towards the local and national government;</li> <li>• Some of them are engaged in the family agricultural activities, without financial compensation for their work;</li> <li>• They are financially dependent from the male family members;</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of national and international funds for support of the rural development;</li> <li>• Use of the EU pre-accession funds (IPA);</li> <li>• Approach as an organized legal entity;</li> <li>• Distribution of products beyond Macedonia through the immigration abroad;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak cooperation with the local self-government units;</li> <li>• Lack of finances for realization of the activities set;</li> </ul>

On the basis of the analysis carried out in the field (through interviews and discussions with the Albanian women in both municipalities) we can define the common characteristics – some of them are comparative advantages and some of them are weaknesses.

### Weaknesses and opportunities

These conclusions are some of the weaknesses and, in the same time, opportunities for proposing alternatives for possible engagement:

1. The Albanian women are usually engaged only as housewives. Some of them are forced to wear the traditional clothes. Some women also marry in accordance with their family choice;
2. They do not contribute to the family budget and they are financially dependent from the male family members (although some of them are engaged in doing hard physical works, in the common family activities – they do not get financial reward);
3. The older women have lower educational background. The younger women are changing the traditional values and they are fighting to take position of a woman that is involved in the family decision making, a woman that will be educated and independent;
4. They are not aware of the joint acting on the market through legal, organized form that will facilitate in many ways their function. In addition, this will also enable them to utilize local and international funds for financial support;
5. They have no knowledge whatsoever about the legal provisions required for legal functioning of a company – some them do not even know what is a registration of an enterprise, what is cash register machine or invoice;
6. They work in wrong colors (usually light brown and beige colors) which are not attractive on the market. However, the Albanian women in both municipalities are ready to adapt their products to the demands on the labor market (lighter and stronger colors such as pink, green, yellow);

7. Their economic situation can not provide startup capital for a company. However, they can solve this problem by selling their products (artifacts) they already made and which they have in stock;
8. In order to manage the legal entity, which is the prerequisite for sustainability of this initiative and for long-term solution of the unemployment problem, it is necessary for them to undergo a series of trainings that will strengthen their managerial skills in many aspects and will enable them to become independent after some time in the management of their interests and finances. In this current situation in which the Albanian women from both municipalities are we can absolutely not talk about independent management with a legal entity (regarding the knowledge they have about managing a company of association).

### **Comparative advantages**

These are conclusions in relation to some of the comparative advantages that were possible to be identified (on the grounds of which this Strategy for employment is also based):

1. The women know how to make artifacts by using needle – “milence” (*hand made table cloth – interpreter note*), wristbands for sleeves, flowers, knitted edges for bedclothes. They sew and purr “dimijas”, shalvar (*kind of baggy trousers – interpreter note*), shirts with ethnic designs. The weaving is not present;
2. Something which makes the Albanian women very proud are their skills in making artifacts featured with traditional-ethnic values. Another alternative is the cooking of traditional food. In discussions with some of the women it turned out that some of them (widows) were able to secure financial income for the entire family (including education for the children) exactly by making artifacts with ethnic features;
3. Some of the older women are fully prepared, through relevant forms of trainings in appropriately prepared workshops, to share their knowledge to the younger generations (including the weaving and making of “yamboliya” (*warm bedclothes – interpreter note*) which is almost forgotten);

## **2. Alternatives for employment/ self-employment of the Albanian women and their comparison analysis**

By analyzing the labor market on national level as well as from the SWOT analysis of the municipalities and the SWOT analysis of the characteristics of the Albanian women made through field interviews, we can conclude that the typical and conventional models of employment implemented by the National Employment Agency do not treat this target group of unemployed persons – Albanian women – which can be confirmed by the high unemployment rate.

If we take the data obtained at the workshops from the Albanian women and in accordance with their education status and realistic opportunities for economic engagement in the family and in the municipality, we can define three areas i.e. alternatives for employment i.e. self-employment:

### **1. Making of artifacts with traditional-ethnic features**

This alternative refers to artisan skills for making of artifacts that have traditional-ethnic features that can be distributed on the market through a developed marketing system – using the consignment system and promotion and cherishing of the cultural values by including everyone interested from the defined target group;

### **2. Catering service in authentic ethnic ambient and traditional cuisine**

The area of catering services, as another alternative, could offer traditional cuisine in an authentic ethnic ambient. This requires large investment at the beginning of the process accompanied in the same time with some additional requirements which are important for the success and sustainability and will have limited inclusion of persons from the target group;

### **3. The farming as a family activity**

The third alternative is the agricultural sector but only as a family activity where dominant is the male factor and where the woman role is only as someone who sometimes does the hard physical work, with agricultural activities which are ad-hoc and without initial marketing plan, communication skills or distribution channels and where distribution is seasonal, depending on the agricultural production;

The elements and the criteria based on the business plan concept were used in order to come up with an analysis and rank the alternatives. By doing so we have in mind that the ranking was made in accordance with well known elements and criteria. From this concept we can also ascertain good majority of the additional elements that need to be part of some other project in the future, which are more concisely provided at the end of this document (section on the recommendations for implementation).

#### **Criteria:**

##### **1. General parameters of the alternative**

Objectives, Mission, Vision and key for success;

##### **2. Ownership**

Legal status and ownership structure, location, spatial capacity (premises) and equipping, key abilities of the management team;

### 3. Start-up costs

### 4. What is being sold – description of the products

Description of the products, competitive comparison, sales literature/ brochures, source, technology, future products;

### 5. Market analysis

Market analysis, strategy and implementation, analysis of the competition;

### 6. Marketing strategy

Strategy of prices, strategy of promotion, strategy of distribution, strategy of communication with the stakeholders;

### 7. Sales strategy

Projections of the sales, marketing plan, management;

### 8. Financial plan

Important assumptions, key financial indicators, profitability analysis;

### 9. Organizational structure

Management team, staff plan;

Table 21 – Overview of the Comparison analysis of the alternatives for employment of the Albanian women

Alternative 1 Making of artifacts	Alternative 2 Catering services	Alternative 3 Agriculture
<p><b>Main parameters</b></p> <p>1. They are ready to be faced with the challenge of managing a business; they are ready for changes and for new knowledge;</p> <p><b>Ownership</b></p> <p>2. They can be registered as civil association, as a company or they can register craftsmen activity;</p> <p>3. It can cover an unlimited number of women;</p> <p>4. No premises are necessary in the beginning – they can work from home;</p> <p><b>Startup costs</b></p> <p>5. If they are registered as civil association they do not have to show a startup (charter) capital;</p> <p>6. No charter capital is needed – they can use the current stocks they have at home;</p> <p><b>Product description</b></p> <p>7. The women know how to make all sorts of artifacts since the earliest age;</p> <p>8. The products can be sold virtually everywhere and at any time; they have no expiration date;</p> <p><b>Market analysis</b></p>	<p><b>Main parameters</b></p> <p>1. They are uncertain that they will be able to face the challenge of managing a restaurant or similar undertaking;</p> <p><b>Ownership</b></p> <p>2. They have to register a catering activity that will have HACCP system for healthy food established;</p> <p>3. We are talking about limited number of Albanian women that are engaged;</p> <p>4. Appropriate premises are required that will be fully equipped in accordance with the national standards on healthy food; they can not work at home;</p> <p><b>Startup costs</b></p> <p>5. They must have startup (charter) capital;</p> <p>6. startup capital is required for a catering facility with HACCP system;</p> <p><b>Product description</b></p> <p>7. They women know how to cook traditional dishes and they learn this since their early age;</p> <p>8. The distribution of the products is limited in the terms of time and area; the products have</p>	<p><b>Main parameters</b></p> <p>1. The agriculture is not an area of activity they accept with enthusiasm – it is something they have to work on;</p> <p><b>Ownership</b></p> <p>2. If the family business is legally registered then, according to the tradition, this is done in the name of the male family members (the ownership of the agricultural land is also in their name). They can be registered as Individual Farmer (IZ), to be registered, or as a “limited liability company – single person”, “limited liability company”, etc.;</p> <p>3. We are talking about limited number of Albanian women involved;</p> <p>4. No business premises are necessary; it is necessary to be equipped with agricultural and auxiliary mechanization;</p> <p><b>Startup costs</b></p> <p>5. They must have startup (charter) capital;</p> <p>6. Startup (charter) capital is required;</p> <p><b>Product description</b></p> <p>7. Some of the women are engaged in the agriculture if that is family business;</p> <p>8. The products are foodstuff, seasonal and with</p>

<p>9. Some of them have experience in selling the artifacts on the market; 10. Local and international market; <b>Marketing strategy</b> 10. National and international funds (and IPA) can be obtained for a marketing strategy with advertising material; <b>Key abilities of the management team</b> 11. It is necessary to establish a management team made of Albanian women and it is necessary to build their capacities; <b>Sources of financing</b> 12. National and international funds for support can be used, including IPA funds;</p>	<p>short life; <b>Market analysis</b> 9. They have experience in preparing food for commercial purposes; 10. Local market; <b>Marketing strategy</b> 10. The marketing and the advertisement material (including the media coverage) must be financed from own sources; <b>Key abilities of the management team</b> 11. The women will not manage the company; we are talking about family businesses and the management is right of the male family members; <b>Sources of financing</b> 12. IPARD funds can be used with initially secured 100% financing for realization;</p>	<p>limited life; <b>Market analysis</b> 9. They never get any financial remuneration for their work in the agricultural family business, they remain dependent from the male family members; 10. Local, regional and national market; <b>Marketing strategy</b> 10. Nothing they do is with a marketing plan. They have no initially developed distribution channel; <b>Key abilities of the management team</b> 11. The women will not manage the company; we are talking about family businesses and the management is right of the male family members; <b>Sources of financing</b> 12. IPARD and national funds can be used with initially secured 100% financing for realization;</p>
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Both municipalities are rural municipalities in which there are mainly agricultural activities. The women (if they are involved in the agricultural activities) remain unemployed and they are financially dependent from the other family members.

If we are taking about catering activity in authentic style and preparation of traditional food, large startup capital is required for full equipping of the catering premises, including the introduction HACCP system. These activities are commonly family business in those families that already have long-term experience in the catering, which is eventually a family tradition. The catering is also dependent on other circumstances which are crucial for successful work: location, remoteness from the roads, other tourist attractions in vicinity. This form of business activity is not appropriate also because it would include very small and limited number of women.

On the other side, the women have skills for manual making of artifacts by which they can contribute to the family budget and towards improvement of the overall welfare of the municipality. They do not have to leave their homes and they can continue caring for the family and perform the family obligations as housewives, they can sell the stocks at the beginning of the activity, no startup capital is required, they are not limited by time and space and in the same time they can get organized in association form and jointly act on the market. They can also use financial support from national and international funds.

Table 22 – Comparison between the three proposed alternatives on the basis of the criteria set in the Business Plan concept

No.	ALTERNATIVE CRITERION	Alternative 1 Making of artifacts	Alternative 2 Catering services	Alternative 3 Agriculture
1	Main parameters	5	3	2
2	Ownership	5	2	2
3	Startup costs	5	1	1
4	Product description	5	3	2
5	Market analysis	4	2	3
6	Marketing strategy	4	2	1
7	Key abilities of the management team	2	1	1
8	Sources of financing	5	2	3
<b>Total:</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

**Legend:**

- 1 - Unsatisfactory;
- 2 - Sufficient;
- 3 – Good;
- 4 – Very good;
- 5 – Excellent;

The comparative analysis showed that the best alternative for economic engagement of the Albanian women is the making of artifacts with national ethnic values, as an alternative way of promotion of the employment and self-employment.

### 3. Comparative analysis of the forms of registration

Analytically defined alternative for economic engagement of the Albanian women is the making of artifacts that are featured with national ethnic values.

In the table below we compare the form of registration of a legal entity.

Table 22 – Comparative analysis of the form of registration

Civil association – NGO	Commercial company (“Limited Liability Company – Single Person/ DOOEL)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No startup (charter) capital is required</li> <li>2. Assembly consisted of minimum 5 persons is required, with the option for unlimited number of members</li> <li>3. The decision making will be made jointly, by dividing the obligations and responsibility which creates the feeling of equality with regards to the rights and obligations;</li> <li>4. All money that are earned by the association are for specific purposes without profit, allocated between the members in accordance with the consignment agreement, with specific (initially agreed) percentage for functioning of the association;</li> <li>5. Unlimited number of women can work in the association on the basis of contract per services rendered, all of them having the same rights and opportunities;</li> <li>6. The association can apply for funds to the national programs for rural development and for pre-accession funds for the Fourth IPA Component, as well as for other international funds;</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charter capital is required of minimum 307.500 denars (which the Albanian women in both municipalities do not have)</li> <li>2. The registration of the legal entity (craftsmen company) would be in the name of minimum one person with possibility for employment of people and will also include payment of the obligations towards the state;</li> <li>3. The decision making and the obligations are made/ borne by one person;</li> <li>4. The legal entity shows profit;</li> <li>5. The responsibility and the decision making are centralized, with possibility for work by the women on the basis of contract per services rendered but not with the same rights and responsibilities as the director or the founder of the company;</li> <li>6. The company can apply for IPARD with initially secured funds for realization of the project;</li> </ol>

The analysis showed that the most appropriate form of legally organized activity of the Albanian women is civil association (NGO). This form would yield advantages compared to registration of a legal entity (company) in accordance with the Law on Companies of the Republic of Macedonia. This manner of organization will achieve significant (unlimited) involvement of all interested Albanian women, their joint actions, equal engagement and equal division of the responsibility as well as possibility for establishment of conditions for long-term existence through self-financing, utilization of national and international funds for support of the rural development and utilization of the IPA funds.

#### 4. Dynamic plan of activities for realization of the analysis recommendations

In the foreword of this document we mentioned that this Strategy is just part of the overall project, financed by the USAID MGLA on employment and self-employment of the Albanian women in the municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce in which case study analysis was done and the information necessary for shaping of the Strategy were obtained. Furthermore, the project also foresees a pilot phase in which the Strategy recommendations for long-term solution to the issue of unemployment of the Albanian women will be applied.

##### 4.1. Registration of Association of Albanian Women

Some of the Albanian women in both municipalities have experience in distributing artifacts and generate income. However, these are only seldom individual examples, only temporary and not

organized. The establishment of association<sup>11</sup>, as a legal form of functioning of the Albanian women activities will enable organized actions and in the same time offer protection from illegal (unregistered) and ad-hoc functioning.

The association will represent the interest of the women in front of Government organizations and NGOs, will help find markets and make contacts with international buyers. It will provide incentives and focusing of the young people interest on the manual making of traditional products. The association will assist for professional training and education of the Albanian women from the rural areas towards improvement of the skills for hand making (educations, lectures, seminars, trainings, sharing of best practices with women from other municipalities not only from Macedonia but also from abroad).

The women association will aim to protect the economic, social and cultural interests of its members as well as to work towards improvement of the market economy conditions.

**The registration of the women association will ensure the following:**

- Engagement of the unemployed Albanian women from the rural areas in the making of traditional products;
- Continuation of the tradition by preserving the authenticity of the hand made products, promotion of traditional and newly designed hand-made products thus contributing towards promotion of the Macedonian culture;
- Socialization of the women from the rural areas through employment;
- Stimulation of the self-employment among the women from rural areas;
- Reduction of the social isolation of the women from the rural areas;
- Promotion of the region through the hand made products;
- Incentive for development of the small economy and tourism in the rural areas;

**Source of financing:**

USAID MLGA

**4.2. Opening of exhibition and sales center**

The key approach in the realization of the activities is support and networking of all parties concerned on local level for the purpose of their joint acting and promotion of the products.

The municipality would be one of the potential sources that could provide its contribution by providing temporary premises in a building that would accommodate the Association, including the sales space. It is necessary to purchase equipment required for the daily operation of the sales center and for intensifying of the promotional activities such as computer with printer and photo camera that will be also used to develop the catalogue and other promotional materials. The municipality could also grant a certain symbolic financial amount which can be used to buy the minimum equipment for functioning of the premises. All members of the Association could provide their contribution (recycled equipment such as chairs, desks, shelves for exhibiting the products, etc.).

The initiation of the sales center will contribute towards attracting larger number of buyers and joint action by the producers. The sales space would be managed by the Association members. It would house the products that will be made by the women. Every woman will sign a

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<sup>11</sup> It is foreseen that one association of citizens is registered in each municipality

consignment agreement on the basis of which they will be able to exhibit their products. Uniform labels for the products will be designed, typical for the region. The development of joint promotional materials will contribute towards joint promotion of the traditional products and attraction of large number of buyers.

In accordance with the laws, the legal framework will be defined for provision of exhibiting and sales of non-industrial and non-classified products (assignment contracts with the producers, securing of the appropriate legal documentation from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Economy).

Cash register machine will be purchased for the sales center. A branch office is possible to be registered under the umbrella of the Association, in the Central Registry of the Republic of Macedonia.

#### **Possible sources of financing:**

1. USAID;
2. Municipalities of Studenichani and Tearce;
3. Agency for Financial Support of the Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Macedonia (IPARD Agency);
4. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of Macedonia from the Program for Financial Support to the Agriculture (general measures funds);
5. IPA funds, Component IV – Human Resources Development – Program for Improvement of the Conditions for Employment on the Labor Market of Women from Ethnic Minorities;
6. UNDP;
7. FIOO-M;

#### **4.3. Sales, distribution channels and promotion of the products**

The traditional products will be intended for the local and international market.

The products distribution channels can be:

- Direct sales through the sales center that will involve people (kind of good will ambassadors) that have the knowledge to present the products to the potential buyers in adequate manner, thanks to their knowledge of the tradition and the manner of making of such products;
- Website development for Internet promotion of the products and of the sales center. The web page will include electronic version of all products. During the implementation of the project the possibility to start online sales will be also considered (in addition to the continuous update of the information);
- Participation on fairs, sales at tourist sites and in the frames of the workshops. The local traditional products will be also promoted in an organized way on special events for that purpose:
  - Chifte Amam - Skopje;
  - Ilinden Days - Bitola;
  - Ilinden Days – Krushevo
  - Traditional Products Fair - Ohrid;

- Traditional Products Fair “Maleshevija Region at your fingertips” in Berovo;
- National Fair of Municipalities;
  
- In order to make the products recognizable, labels will be designed and printed, including declaration for the product, its price and material;
- The artifacts can be offered to the galleries specialized for hand made products (Gallery in the Mother Theresa Museum, etc.);
- Development of products catalogue, including picture of the product, detailed description of the material, the process of making and contact details. The catalogue will be the first joint promo material for the specific local products. It will include photos and descriptions of the specific products, how are they made and contact information about the local makers. The catalogue will be printed in 250 copies, in quality color paper;
- Printing of promo fliers for the products. For better promotion of the Center for sales and of the traditional products, 2.000 color copies of the flier will be printed and distributed through the tourist agencies, centers for development and other institutions;

### **Possible sources of financing:**

Funds can be sought from:

1. USAID;
2. Agency for Financial Support of the Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Macedonia (IPARD Agency);
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of Macedonia from the Program for Financial Support to the Agriculture (general measures funds);
4. IPA funds, Component IV – Human Resources Development – Program for Improvement of the Conditions for Employment on the Labor Market of Women from Ethnic Minorities;
5. UNDP;
6. FIOO-M;

## **4.4. Trainings and workshops**

The trainings intended for capacity building of the Albanian women that are involved in the process of promotion of the self-employment through making of artifacts and artisan skills, can be divided in the following four categories:

### **a. Trainings on how to manage a legal entity**

- Human resources management;
- Communication skills;
- Project development and project cycle management;
- Market survey;
- Marketing;
- Branding;
- Design;

- Financial management;
- IT and Internet use;

#### **b. Trainings for improvement of the craftsmen skills required for making of the artifacts**

- Development and making of souvenirs with ethno motives;
- Revival of the skill of weaving and making of “yamboli”;

#### **c. Trainings for knowledge transfer to the younger generations (training center)**

- Opening and functioning of training center for knowledge and skills transfer regarding the making of artifacts;

The workshops will be practical and will be delivered by the local makers – women that are members of the Association.

#### **d. Train the trainers**

- Capacity building of the professionals and volunteers that will be working with women from minority groups;

#### **Possible sources of financing:**

Funds can be sought from:

1. USAID;
2. Agency for Financial Support of the Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Macedonia (IPARD Agency);
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of Macedonia from the Program for Financial Support to the Agriculture (general measures funds);
4. IPA funds, Component IV – Human Resources Development – Program for Improvement of the Conditions for Employment on the Labor Market of Women from Ethnic Minorities;
5. UNDP;
6. FIOO-M;

#### **5. Expected outcomes from the activities**

The series of activities for implementation of the Strategy recommendations will result in the following:

- Introduction of new active measures for self-employment of the Albanian women;
- Temporary employment of the Albanian women through craft activities and making of artifacts;

- Improvement of the economic situation of the Albanian women that will be making the traditional/ manually made products;
- Improved economic power of the women from the rural areas
- Promotion of the products at fairs;
- Affirmation, cherishing and continuation of the ethno-cultural tradition;
- Young women trained in skills for making products that have traditional-ethno values;
- Poverty reduction;
- Socialization of the women from the rural areas;
- Creating benefits for rural tourism development;
- Opportunities for cooperation with the Employment Agency and use of their funds (and other funds also) for self-employment;
- Opportunities for establishment of commercial legal entity that would professionally perform the cooperative services on behalf of the women - artisans;

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The analyses made on national level<sup>12</sup> showed that the current traditional forms of measures in the areas of employment (implemented through the National Employment Agency) can not efficiently meet the needs of the women from minority groups on the labor market since they are mainly focused on the unemployed people that have higher education. These target groups can be efficiently treated through alternative employment services and training programs that are custom made to fit their individual needs, abilities and circumstances in which they live, including comprehensive approach in the terms of anti-discriminatory activities.

The human resources development by improving the quality of quantity of the human potential results in increased number of employment and better jobs, higher economic growth and improvement of the national competitiveness in international frames through:

1. Integration of the youth groups on the labor market;
2. Promotion of employments – attracting and retaining at job larger number of people;
3. Social inclusion – promotion of an inclusive labor market;
4. Social integration of the ethnic communities;
5. Integration of the women from minority communities into the active labor market;
6. Improvement of the potential for work among women from ethnic minorities;

**The above said can be achieved through the following:**

1. Improvement of the knowledge, attitudes and skills among women from minority groups;
2. Development and delivery of specific services for employment;
3. Delivery of trainings in accordance with the specific needs of the women from minority groups;
4. Capacity building for professionals and volunteers working with women from the ethnic minorities;

### 1. How to reduce the negative risks?

What can be undertaken in order to reduce the negative risks? Mainly it is the attitude towards the issue, identification of the negative trends in the marginalized groups, their timely detection and timely implementation of measures for improvement of the social and cultural development in the rural communities. In this regard, it is necessary to take into account some parameters such as the difference of the marginalized groups, which is closely related to the traditional values and customs.

The measures undertaken should always be in accordance with the real picture in the field, assumed through system analysis of the situation and in-depth observation of the target group needs (such can differ from the established assumptions). In other words, without making an insight into the marginalized group itself (in the urban community) no conclusions should be made, especially not from the verbal information provided by the local people. The communication and the verbal information provided by the local population can only part of the overall observation in completing the overall picture that will be identified in the previous period.

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<sup>12</sup> Results from the survey carried out regarding the use of IPA funds which define the interventions areas in the Component IV for development of human resources.

In this regard, very important would be also a chronology of some past events, information on the historical development of the rural community, the relations between the different ethnic communities, the past initiatives for social development, cultural influences throughout the past years (during longer time period) and the standards of living and expectations for future development of the rural community.

## **2. The education as a tool**

The trend of investment in the education, the increase of the education quality, socialization, the changing of experience and making friendships is of great importance in the reduction of the gap between the rural and urban environment, regardless of the distance. In such a process the distance in kilometers will become insignificant because the training of the generations will be at appropriate level and the social development would deeply change the rural environment.

The education does not refer solely to continuous higher education but, above all, refers to education for acquiring skills for promotion of own values and revival of the rural area through trainings, workshops, meetings of artisans and art colonies.

## **3. Tradition, estrangement from the environment and communication**

The situation would be significantly improved if the institutions that have social-health character would be available to the rural community people on daily basis. This would especially encourage them to speak up about the problems of that nature.

The opening of theaters (halls) for projections, cultural homes, sporting centers, internet locations... would significantly improve the situation in this area. Due to the traditional values and religious believes there is an opportunity for opening of women clubs where the female population can spend time together on continuous basis.

## **4. What are the benefits?**

In the rural areas the everyday life is simpler, cheaper and more natural. However, in the rural areas the socialization is more difficult. The people are inclined towards traditional values and religious dogma and the vices are more accessible to the ordinary people.

These are only some of the difference that unambiguously describe in simplest manner the benefits and disadvantages of the rural area and the marginalized group living in such area.

- Internet promotion of the traditional products, web portals, pages for own promotion, pages for promotion of the rural tourism, traditional good, original products and services offered;
- Planned production of traditional products and opportunities for promotion of the winter and summer rural tourism with small changes in the offer of the food and service;

- Analysis of the additional investments: cable cars, swimming pools, projection theaters (halls), breeding of indigenous species and selling them, revival of the past, etc.;
- Traditional offer in a form of artifacts, crafts that are almost extinct, local and simple food, authentic ambient and untouched natural values. With this kind of promotion the rural area is promoting itself on the “map of events”;
- Investment in the access infrastructure, restoration of the old buildings and cherishing of legends in authentic and understandable style. This kind of promotion will attract the artistic public through the opportunity to organize literature public readiness and art colonies;
- Accessibility to the modern manners of communication i.e. access to the Internet and mobile phones. This opens up opportunities for the people in the rural areas to be able to choose between the options, from the tradition and simplicity all the way to global access and communications;

## 5. Recommendations for implementation

No.	Activities	Results	Duration	Resources needed	Indicators	Verification sources	Risks
1.	Registration of the Association of Albanian Women	Two NGOs registered	1 month	30.000 denars	1. Resolutions from the Central Registry on registration of the associations; 2. The number of Albanian women that are members of the Association;	1. Central Registry of the Republic of Macedonia 2. Archives of the associations registered	1. Long procedure due to the slow institutions 2. Lack of trust and low response rate by the Albanian women;
2.	Opening of sales and exhibition space, including office and space that is fully equipped for modern and ongoing communication	Opening of joint sales and exhibition premises, including office	4 months	1.200.000 denars	Contract for rental of the premises	The Association archives	1. Lack of finances; 2. Lack of interest by the municipality to support the process;
3.	Promotion and sales of the products – development of marketing strategy and implementation	1. Marketing strategy developed; 2. Channels for local and international distribution established; 3. Advertising material developed and distributed; 4. Media advertisement approaches defined;	8 months	1.200.000 denars	1. Marketing strategy; 2. Total number of consignment contracts; 3. Total number of advertising material printed and distributed; 4. Total number of contracts signed with media houses;	The Association archives	1. Lack of finances; 2. Late and irregular collection in accordance with the consignment contracts;
4.	Delivery of trainings and workshops	1. Management team trained; 2. Improved skills for making of artifacts; 3. Professionals and volunteers to work with Albanian women trained;	12 months	4.000.000 denars	1. The number of trained women from the management team; 2. The level of improved knowledge; 3. The number of professionals and volunteers trained;	The Association archives	1. Lack of finances; 2. Loosing of interest among Albanian women due to the time component;
5.	Opening and equipping of workshop for trainings – training center	1. The workshop – training center opened and equipped; 2. Young people trained;	12 months	5.000.000 denars	1. Contract for rental of the training center; 2. The number of young persons trained;	The Association archives	1. Lack of finances; 2. Loosing of interest among Albanian women due to the time component; 3. Lack of trust and low response rate by the young Albanian women;

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1**

#### **OVERVIEW OF PRODUCTS, TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS**

During the workshops with the Albanian women, we defined the **products** that are made:

- Popular, traditional costume of the Albanian women – “kaftan”, “dimija”, “shalvari”, shirts;
- Decorations for the wardrobe: wristbands for sleeves, collars for blouses and shirts;
- Decorations for chairs and tables;
- Bedding with ethno motives;
- Modern wardrobe with ethno motives;

**The techniques** used in the making of the artifacts with ethnic values are the following:

- Sewing;
- Needlework (both with machines and by hand);
- Knitting (with one, two or five needles, point-less);
- Combination of two of the above techniques or combination of all three;

The weaving is not present in this region and it has been almost entirely forgotten. Some older women (ages between 70 to 80 years) know how to weave by using loom and they could share their knowledge to the younger generations but presently there is no interest among the young women.

The following **materials** are used:

- Silk;
- Cotton;
- Velvet;
- Gold or silver thread;
- Beads;

According to the initial information we got, the prices of the products (depending on the type of the product, technique and material used) range between 1.800 to 120.000 denars.



- "Dimijas" mainly used as a wedding costume for the bride -



- Dimijas, kaftan and belt for the dimijas -



- Some of the workshops with the Albanian women in the Studenichani and Tearce municipalities -



- Wristbands for sleeves, collars for shirts, "skutala" (laps), decorations... -

## **Annex 2**

### **SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN RURAL AREAS**

#### **1. MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN RURAL AREAS**

The rural areas have some default characteristics that can characterize them according to the educational structure of the population, traditional values, the estrangement of the environment, remoteness from the urban areas and low flow of goods and information.

The access to the groups that live in the rural areas is very important for the purpose of socialization and achievement of the cultural development level. Since it is common for the rural communities to associate to marginalization of the social benefits and minimization of the urban values, serious approach to this issue is required because the consequences can be long-term and irreversible during longer period of time, which leaves trace on the common human being, its family as well as on the dynamics and quality of the everyday life and the usual working obligations.

What can be undertaken in order to reduce the negative risks? Mainly it is the attitude towards the issue, identification of the negative trends in the marginalized groups, their timely detection and timely implementation of measures for improvement of the social and cultural development in the rural communities. In this regard, it is necessary to take into account some parameters such as the difference of the marginalized groups, which is closely related to the traditional values and customs.

The measures undertaken should always be in accordance with the real picture in the field, assumed through system analysis of the situation and in-depth observation of the target group needs (such can differ from the established assumptions). In other words, without making an insight into the marginalized group itself (in the urban community) no conclusions should be made, especially not from the verbal information provided by the local people. The communication and the verbal information provided by the local population can only part of the overall observation in completing the overall picture that will be identified in the previous period. In this regard, very important would be also a chronology of some past events, information on the historical development of the rural community, the relations between the different ethnic communities, the past initiatives for social development, cultural influences throughout the past years (during longer time period) and the standards of living and expectations for future development of the rural community.

##### **1.1. Educational structure of the population**

The educational structure of the people is by all means one of the most important factors in the behavior of the individuals in the marginalized groups in rural communities. In these areas the educational level is mainly low or secondary but there are exceptional examples when some individuals will complete higher education. However, the point remains that very small percentage of those completing university education return to their rural community (around 2%). These are usually people that have family business or are involved in some working tasks in the municipality. This lack of return to the rural community is usually caused by their inability to find their place in the urban rather than by the wish to return and perspective future in the rural area. More specifically, they are very little tied by the traditional values, family relations and the natural environment which is mostly due to the reduced opportunities for development and the ambitions that are alive due to the modern way of life.

Much larger is the number of individuals that have graduated secondary education in the local school while much smaller is the number of those that have graduated secondary school in some urban area – this is mainly due to the financial capacity of their parents as well as due to the perception that maybe such will result in better and more quality education, with positive social effects on the individuals' development. Commonly (with some exceptions) if the individual enrolls in some other secondary school in some urban environment, his/ her chances of resuming the education onto university are more than 90%. This usually assumes good financial situation but also a wish for progress and greater ambitions of the individual.

The family tradition of reduced education also influences the parents' decision not to encourage their children for further education. The common thinking in such areas is how to achieve some social family reconciliation with the resources managed by the wider family i.e. if they deal with farming it should be within the foreseen minimum; if they do production of traditional products it should be mainly for the local market without even thinking to use some modern tools for promotion and sales of the traditional artifacts. It is important to mention that, in the recent years, this situation is changing and there is progress towards more modern ways of promotion. However, this is still insignificant and minimal.

### 1.1.2. The education as a tool

*If the importance of the educational process in the promotion and sales of the rural area is increased, it would be much easier to explain to the parents that the education is a modern necessity.*

The trend of investment in the education, the increase of the education quality, socialization, the changing of experience and making friendships is of great importance in the reduction of the gap between the rural and urban environment, regardless of the distance. In such a process the distance in kilometers will become insignificant because the training of the generations will be at appropriate level and the social development would deeply change the rural environment.

### 1.1.3. What are the benefits?

- Internet promotion of the traditional products, web portals, pages for own promotion, pages for promotion of the rural tourism, traditional good, original products and services offered.
- Planned production of traditional products and opportunities for promotion of the winter and summer rural tourism with small changes in the offer of the food and service.
- Analysis of the additional investments: cable cars, swimming pools, projection theaters (halls), breeding of indigenous species and selling them, revival of the past, etc..

The education does not refer solely to continuous higher education but, above all, refers to education for acquiring skills for promotion of own values and revival of the rural area through trainings, workshops, meetings of artisans and art colonies.

Experiences from other countries such as Ireland and Turkey point out to the need to initially bring closer the educational processes to the rural environments so that it is possible later to respond to the increased demand and to the results from the promotional measures. In the 1980s these two countries used to be one of the most undeveloped in Europe. The experiences now confirm that Ireland is one of the most developed countries in the European

Union and that Turkey is slowly growing into a regional power on two continents and three civilizations.

This example unambiguously points out that it is justified to promote this measure in the rural areas and provide socialization of the local population.

## 1.2. Traditional values

The cherishing of traditional values is typical for the rural environments, especially in those that are more distant from the urban areas.

Survey was carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians). They were asked five questions and the following results were obtained.

### The questions:

1. Would you make wedding in accordance with the traditional or modern customs?

Customs	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Traditional	97%	90%	68%
Modern	1%	7%	29%
I don't know	2%	3%	3%

2. Would you deviate from the tradition if it is contrary to your personal wishes and beliefs?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
No	65%	67%	60%
yes	11%	15%	23%
I don't know	24%	18%	17%

3. Is tradition closely related to the religious beliefs?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	92%	83%	72%
No	1%	5%	11%
I don't know	7%	12%	17%

4. Would you immigrate from your place of birth because of the rural character of that environment?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	56%	70%	87%
No	39%	11%	3%
I don't know	5%	19%	10%

## 5. Traditional or modern values?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Traditional	72%	53%	33%
Moder	21%	21%	53%
I don't know	7%	26%	14%

According to the results from this survey we can make an overall conclusion that the tradition is slowly (but steady) losing its place in front of the modern challenges. This goes even for the rural areas about which there is a general notion that they deal pretty hard with the traditional dogmas. The most unexpected were results from the question No.5 where it is obvious that the wish for modernization in these environments is much greater than what we can see in the everyday life. In the fourth question the need for modernization of the space with modern content is obvious since the rural environment most definitely deters the young people from the eventual wish to continue living in the urban area (although it is their place of birth( which is clearly pointing out that the problem is even more severe. In the second question we notice a clear wish for separation of the tradition from the own needs and wishes, especially in generational sense. The results from the first question are also towards relief from the traditional dogmas. The third question is more a product of personal conviction on how much the religion is part of the tradition and it does not deviate significantly from the European attitudes.

### 1.3. Estrangement of the environment

The estrangement and alienation of the environment is very subjective factor thus it is difficult to detect. Its origins come from the closed attitudes of the family, gender discrimination which is very common in the rural areas, the age hierarchy in the family, the cases of incest which are almost never reported and are difficult to prove, family-inherited diseases which are usually hidden from the rest, the mental illnesses which are seen as a shame for the family thus such are never reported and this prevents the appropriate treatment of these diseases.

In the rural areas the gender discrimination is quite present. It is manifested in the segmentation of the family obligations into male (work in the fields, hard physical work, construction works, etc.) and female (care for the children, care for the family by cooking, washing, etc.). However, more and more we have cases where the women are involved in the agricultural activities of the family without being specially paid for that. Another usual thing is that the female family members have not finished even elementary education and they also do other difficult physical works. The male family members more often finalize their elementary and secondary education (sometimes even university education) but this is usually just one person from the whole family (rarely two and more persons). Because of this, the insecurity among the people is increased (especially among the female population), inability to open up specific perspectives in the society, regardless of the fact that it is a rural area, this increasing the estrangement and the reduced socialization.

The interest for socialization and friendship is reduced and the percentage of tacit friendship (so called shadow socialization) is on increase, which is a very interesting phenomenon. This means that there is a need among the female population to get together away from the eyes of the public i.e. congregate in a specific time of the day at specific places where they will not be seen and in times of the day when they are certain that the male family members do their job

outside of the family house. In these occasions (which usually last up to one hour) they will have a cigarette, drink tea and even drink some alcohol. This is practiced in almost every opportunity they have and the male family members almost never find out about this.

As a result of alienation there are arranged marriages which are usually agreed among the most senior family members, without approval by the parties that are directly involved (the bride and the groom). This results in greater introversion, reduced communication and reduced socialization both among the male and female family members. These things often end up with family misunderstandings but not with termination of such marriage exactly because of the supposed shame from the community and execration they would be subject to if such termination/ divorce happens.

The cases of certain diseases in the family, regardless of whether we are talking about inherited or acquired diseases is in 90% of the cases accompanied with hiding of the real reason because of the shame from the community.

The mental diseases are often subject to ridiculing and sometimes there are even avoidances to marry members of that family due to the fear and lack of information about such condition which, after all, is not so horrible and it can be eventually changed.

The diseases are usually kept hidden from the community and this is reducing the opportunity for appropriate treatment, timely reaction and explanation that such situation can be changed and it is possible to entirely heal that person. In this regard it is important to mention that the rural environment as such is rarely serviced by some institution that would be available to these people on daily basis for eventual advice, opinion or consultation. This would contribute towards reduction of the closeness of the family circle and provide opportunities to talk openly about the health problems, both in the family and in the environment.

The situation would be improved if the social-health institutions would be available to the people from the rural community on daily basis, and this will significantly encourage them to talk openly about these kinds of problems.

The most common way of social life and fun in the rural areas are the meetings in the local restaurants and tavernas. These are good sign of socialization but in the same time quite limited way of congregation and hanging out, without real cultural character, with a tendency to become a vice. This manner of socialization is typical for the male population.

The opening of theaters (halls) for projections, cultural homes, sporting centers, internet locations... would significantly improve the situation in this area. Due to the traditional values and religious believes there is an opportunity for opening of women clubs where the female population can spend time together on continuous basis.

#### **1.4. Remoteness from the urban areas**

The remoteness from the urban communities most definitely has a large effect on the socialization of the population. This effect is noticeable in the time period of advent of the modern trends in all fields of life, reduced possibility for social gathering and congregation because the attractive content and locations are far away, the physical distance which yields problems regarding transportation, the additional travel time and the reduced opportunities for mobility at time of day and night.

It is know that most of the cultural events take place in the urban areas, mainly due to the commercial nature of these events and due to the larger frequency of people, which provides opportunities for better promotion. Furthermore, most of the entertaining events are also taking

place in the urban areas. This situation results in reduction of the possibilities for these events to reach the marginalized groups in the rural areas and the increase of the needs for cultural events in the smaller and undeveloped areas.

The physical distances are additionally complicating the problem. This requires more finances for travel to the urban areas and additional time to be spent. These factors are very difficult for the people from the rural areas so often they are unable to afford to be present on the cultural and entertaining events – this goes even for those people that can afford coming. Put simply – the distance per se is the deterring factor for the wish to travel longer to reach the place.

Commonly, the remote areas are difficult to access with vehicles, the roads are old and ruined or do not exist at all; or they are very narrow and dangerous for traffic. In the Republic of Macedonia the problem with access to the rural areas with car is very real, especially in the areas that are towards the mountains. In some periods of the year, especially in winter (November – March) often is the case when the mountain villages are cut-off from the rest of the country, with very difficult access (or no access at all) to them. Sometimes the situation is so bad that even the ambulance vehicle access is not possible.

As a result of the bad infrastructure very often the public transport is not at the appropriate level – for example, there are no sufficient buses during the day or there is no public transport at all during evening or night hours. In the most rural areas there is only one public transport in the day which commutes to the urban areas. However, there are rural areas in which there is no public transport at all so the people have to walk for several kilometers to reach the closest public transport.

Due to these factors, the remoteness of the rural areas is maybe the main reason for the reduced socialization of the marginalized groups. For the needs of this analysis a survey has been carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians). They were asked five questions and the following results were obtained:

### The questions:

1. Would you go to cinema more often if you were to have appropriate public transport?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	23%	52%	81%
No	71%	7%	11%
I don't know	6%	41%	8%

2. How satisfied you are from the public transport that commutes to and from your place of residence?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Satisfied	69%	50%	12%
Unsatisfied	11%	20%	81%
I don't know	20%	30%	7%

3. Are financial costs for transport problem for you to go out for friendship and gatherings?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	81%	89%	93%
No	17%	9%	5%
I don't know	2%	2%	2%

4. Would you immigrate from your place of birth because of lack of cultural and entertaining activities?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	55%	70%	89%
No	44%	15%	3%
I don't know	1%	15%	8%

5. How many times in one month do you commute to an urban area?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
2-3 times	70%	53%	7%
4-6 times	21%	22%	33%
More than 6 times	9%	25%	60%

The general conclusion from the survey is that the younger generations have a real need for more active gatherings and friendship events, if there are opportunities for that. Another conclusion is that they would never reject a presence to a cultural-entertaining event if such is taking place close to their place of living and if the distance and the manner of transport are not big problem.

### 1.5. Low flow and dissemination of information

This factor is very interesting for observation because some tendencies have changed in just a couple of years which is mainly due to the globalization and the perspectives it brings.

*"Fifteen years ago we had to stay at home and wait for a phone call from a friend as an initiation for gatherings. Now, we have no need to wait at home".*

The technological progress, globalization of the communications, social internet portals, reduced communication costs, reduced distances between the nations and religions, gender equality, human rights – are some of the reasons that have their inevitable effect on the increased flow of information goods thanks to which the real physical distances are diminishing and the real and virtual communication between the people is on increase.

The great technical and technological development, reduction of the communication costs, reduction of the prices of the personal and mobile computers and the better access to communications inevitably results in easier access to information. Due to such changes in the last fifteen years this factor becomes more and more insignificant and marginal.

For the needs of this Study, a survey has been carried out in three villages of the Shar Planina region (Bozovce, Vejce and Tearce) which interviewed 1.200 respondents - 75% women and 25% men ages 25-35 years, 35-45 years and 45-55 years (400 respondents in each age category), (1000 Albanians and 200 Macedonians). They were asked five questions and the following results were obtained:

### The questions:

1. Do you use mobile phone?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	99%	100%	100%
No	1%	%	%

2. Do you know what kind of information you can get from the Internet?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	21%	40%	46%
No	70%	55%	51%
I don't know what is that	9%	5%	3%

3. Do you use social networks on the Internet?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	3%	89%	93%
No	89%	9%	5%
I don't know what is that	8%	2%	2%

4. Do you know what is "Internet search engine"?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	17%	35%	43%
No	83%	65%	57%

5. Do you buy through the Internet?

Answer	45-55 years	35-45 years	25-35 years
Yes	1%	2%	3%
No	77%	80%	77%
I don't know what is that	22%	18%	20%

The survey showed that the situation regarding these virtual developments has been significantly improved. In this aspect, the rural areas in the Republic of Macedonia are not deviating much from the global tendencies for penetration of the IT society in the homes and increased communication frequency.

## **2. BALLAST AND BENEFITS IN THE RURAL AREA**

In the rural areas the everyday life is simpler, cheaper and more natural. However, in the rural areas the socialization is more difficult. The people are inclined towards traditional values and religious dogma, the vices are more accessible to the ordinary people.

These are only some of the difference that unambiguously describe in simplest manner the benefits and disadvantages of the rural area and the marginalized group living in such area.

### **2.1. Recommendations and open opportunities**

- Traditional offer in a form of artifacts, crafts that are almost extinct, local and simple food, authentic ambient and untouched natural values. With this kind of promotion the rural area is promoting itself on the “map of events”.
- Investment in the access infrastructure, restoration of the old buildings and cherishing of legends in authentic and understandable style. This kind of promotion will attract the artistic public through the opportunity to organize literature public readiness and art colonies.
- Accessibility to the modern manners of communication i.e. access to the Internet and mobile phones. This opens up opportunities for the people in the rural areas to be able to choose between the options, from the tradition and simplicity all the way to global access and communications;